

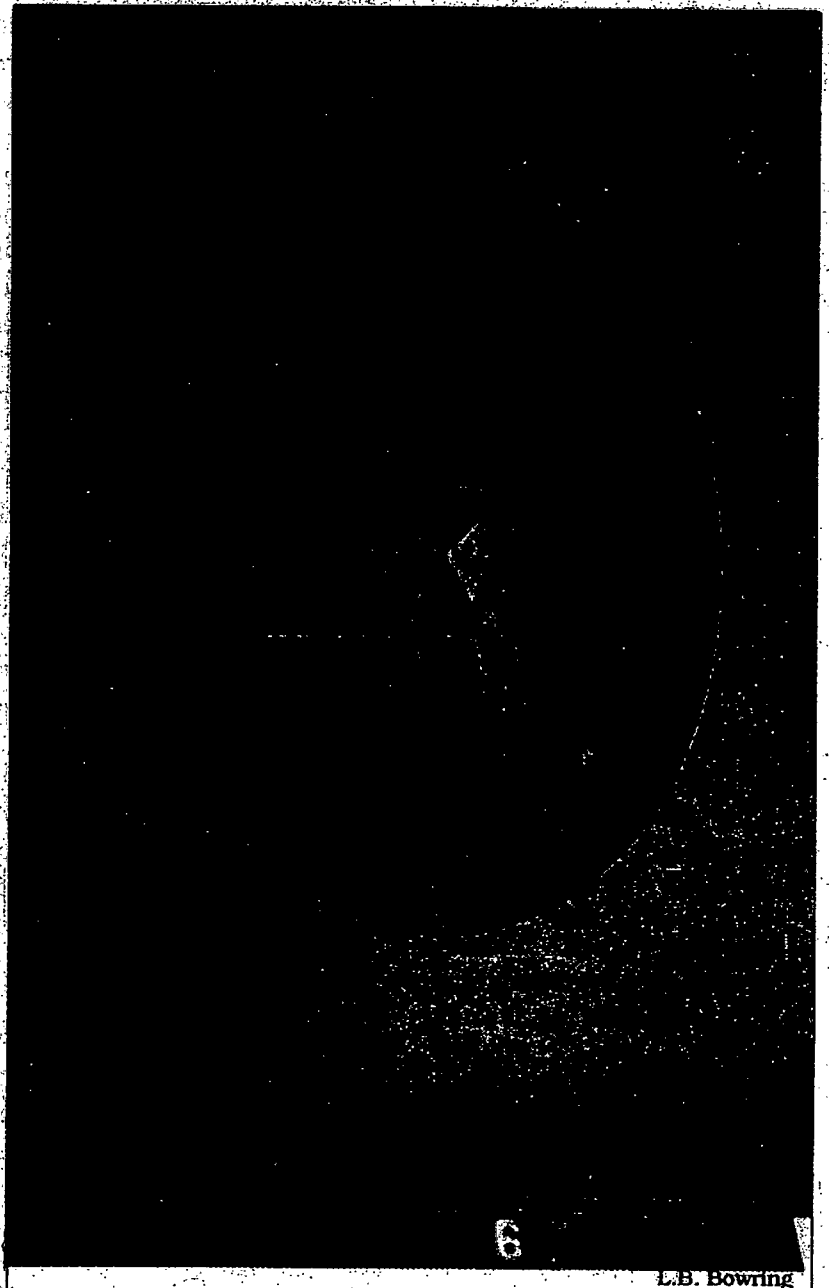
Bowring - A Great Reformer

- Basavaraj N. Akki

In old Mysore during the last century Lewing Benthem Bowring and Sir Mark Cubbon ruled as Commissioners for 39 years 1831-1870). It is these two stalwarts who laid down proper procedures and practices was later recognised as a "Model State".

The Commissioner's rule in Mysore from 1831-1881 marks a distinct phase in the history of the state. It witnessed allround development and gradual transformation of the then existing Hindu system of administration into one that was based on the British model in all its essentials. Sir Mark Cubbon (1831-62) and later Lewing Benthem Bowring (1862-70) who together administered for about 39 years, as Commissioners introduced a number of reforms and set up proper procedures and practices thus laying a solid foundation for future administration.

Then Mysore emerged, as model state in India. These two Commissioners are even today remembered by the people for their valuable service rendered to the state in setting efficient administrative procedure and practices. Thus a solid foundation was established in administrative matters, we remember Bowring as the



L.B. Bowring

great administrator who was the author of all these reforms. Lewing Benthem Bowring was Commissioner of the state from 1862-70. He was an officer of great administrative ability and extensive experience in the Indian affairs.

Three Divisions

Re-organisation of the administrative divisions of the state was the first reform carried out by Bowring. Accordingly three divisions were formed namely *Ashthagrama* (Consisting of Mysore, Hassan and Coorg districts) *Nandidoorga* division (Consisting of Bangalore, Kolar and Tumkur districts) and *Nagar* division (Consisting of Shimoga, Chitradurga and Kadur Districts). A proclamation was issued in 1862 notifying these divisions and taluks attached to each district.

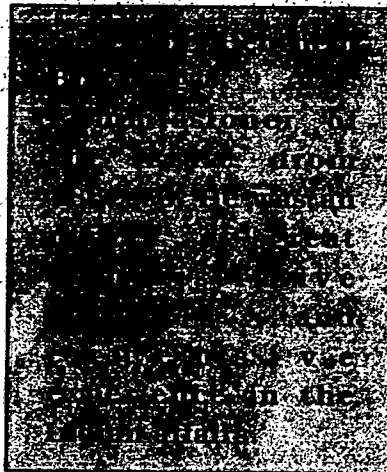
Each district was placed under an European superintendent upto 1869. Then a Commissioner was appointed in his place. Deputy Superintendent assisted by an Assistant Superintendent looked after the administration of each district. The British representative in Mysore came to be designated as Chief Commissioner.

Municipalities

The *Kacheri Terige* or

conservancy tax was levied in the Mysore city for sanitary purposes and the plough tax imposed for the improvements of cross roads in 1860, formed the basis for collection of Municipal and local funds in the state.

The idea of adoption of Municipal Office was started before Bowring's period. It materialised only in 1862 by establishing Bangalore city, Cantonment and Mysore City. Town dues including



tobacco, octroi, unclaimed or confiscated lands of houses, sale proceeds of buildings and sites formed the major source of income. Committee was formed consisting of an European official, non-official, native official and non-official as members for each municipality. Then *Mohatarfa* (Tax on house, looms, shops, oil mills). Octroi. tax on all articles imported for consumption or use within the limits of the town was levied on 12 articles

in 1867, which was extended to 89 articles in 1870. A new Tax was imposed upon all piece goods called *Sayer*. Thus by 1864-65 district head quarters had municipalities.

Police Department

Except in the cantonment of Bangalore, a regularly organised force was unknown in Mysore. From *Amildar*, the recognised head of Police, in the Taluk down to the lowest taluk poen, the officials were employed for all duties like serving judicial processes, supplying wants of travellers and revenue duties. The police force was founded on the remains of the old *Kandachar* or armed militia. Before Bowring it was not easy to introduce great changes in the system. The Bangalore Police establishment was set up for the town of Bangalore, Mysore, Tumkur and Shimoga.

Inam Commission

Inams cover the land given to the servants of the state in recognition of their valuable service. There was no uniformity in granting such *Inams*. Variations in the rules of granting lands were noticed. The Department of *Inam* Commissioner was constituted to streamline these variations. The *Inam* rules for Mysore were

sanctioned by the Government of India in 1868.

The following were the Principles on which the settlement was conducted.

1. *Sannads* granted by the Maharaja or by his predecessors and when they conveyed full powers of alienation and were hereditary, these Inams were treated a heritable and alienable property.

2. *Sannads* emanating as above did not convey full powers of alienation, the Inams might be enfranchised by payment of a quit-rent equal to one-eighth of the assessment of the tenure, except in the case of Inams granted for the performance as religious, charitable and village service, which are still required to be rendered.

3. When *Sannads* have been granted to incompetent persons and when they were less than 50 years old, a compulsory quit-rent equal to one-half of the assessment was imposed. But in doubtful cases and where there was a probability that the *inam* had been enjoyed for fully 50 years the quit-rent to be imposed was one-fourth of the assessment.

At the time of its first organisation in 1866 the Inam department was composed of an Inam Commissioner, one Special

Assistant and three Assistants. Thus the Inam Commission Department was reconstituted.

Survey and settlement

Immediately after the conquest of the country a general topographical survey was made by Col. Mackenzie. When Purnaiya was *Dewan* a revenue survey was made but it was necessarily imperfect at that time and after the lapse of fifty years the records were destroyed during the period of insurrection. Though nothing was done in the way of any general measure a good deal was effected by measurements of particular lands to check the *Shanbogs* in their attempts to falsify the records. In 1862 the more glaring defects apparent in the existing revenue system were examined. The report on proper assessments of various lands was submitted to the Government. After recognising all the defects it decided to introduce reforms in the Revenue survey and settlement.

In introducing the survey and settlement into any taluk the first step taken was the division of the village lands into fields, the limits of such fields were shown by permanent marks. They were not to be made smaller than a necessary without adequate

reason. Classification of land was done with the object of determining the relative values of the fields into which the land was divided; All land was divided into dry-crop, wet-land and garden land.

Judicial Reforms

Besides all these, reforms were brought in the judicial department. The Judicial Officers consisted of the Judicial Commissioner exercising the powers in the chief court, with civil and criminal Jurisdiction over the whole province. The Superintendents of Divisions vested with the powers of Sessions Judges. Deputy Superintendents of Districts, Assistant Superintendents and Amildars. The Judicial Commissioner functions were restricted to Judicial Police, Jail administration, while those of others confined to Civil, Criminal and Revenue Jurisdiction the other changes that were effected the abolition of *Huzur adalat* and *sadar* Munsif Courts, the introduction of the Indian penal code and the Code of Criminal procedure.

Thus after rendering yeoman service to the state Bowring resigned from service in 1870. Thus his term witnessed the most important and far reaching reforms which laid a good foundation for administrative efficiency and competence.

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